

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in the above-identified patent application. The Examiner rejects claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shennib et al. U.S. patent 6,464,709 (hereinafter "Shennib"). Applicants have amended claim 1 to more particularly define the invention. Applicants have also amended claims 6 and 7. The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention, as defined by amended independent claim 1, is directed toward a method of making a graft connection between first and second portions of a patient's tubular body tissue conduit system. The method of applicants' amended claim 1 comprises forming first and second apertures in a side wall of a tubular graft conduit adjacent respective first and second severed ends of the graft conduit. Third and fourth apertures are formed in a side wall of respective first and second portions of the body tissue conduit. A first hollow annular connector is installed through the approximated first and third apertures to form a first hollow annular anastomotic connection between the side walls of the graft conduit and the body tissue conduit. A second hollow annular connector is installed through the approximated second

and fourth apertures to form a second hollow annular anastomotic connection between the side walls of the graft conduit and the body tissue conduit, and thereby connect the first and second portions of the patient's tubular body tissue conduit with the graft conduit.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to further set forth that installing the connectors comprises deforming at least one of the first and second connectors so that the at least one connector axially shortens and presses together the side walls of the graft conduit and body tissue conduit annularly around the approximated apertures. This amendment is fully supported by applicants' specification, for example, at page 21, lines 23-27. Applicants have amended claim 6 to correct an inadvertent error in dependency. Applicants have also amended claim 6 and 7 to make clear that the antecedent basis for "the deforming" in claims 6 and 7 derives from "deforming the first connector . . ." in claim 5. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Applicants submit that claims 1-15 are allowable over Shennib because Shennib fails to show or suggest all the features of applicants' independent claim 1. In particular, nowhere in Shennib is it shown or suggested that device 1 may

be deformed to axially shorten the device and press together juxtaposed vessels 9 and 10 annularly around openings 46 and 48. At most, Shennib discusses the use of a balloon catheter after completion of the anastomosis in a way "not very [different] than a post dilatation of an angioplasty stent" to "fully expand the device and enhance the sealing and connecting properties of the device" (Shennib, col. 10, line 65 to col. 11, line 4). Thus, Shennib does not show or suggest deforming the device so that the device axially shortens and presses together the side walls of the graft conduit and body tissue conduit annularly around the approximated apertures, as required by applicants' amended claim 1. Therefore, for at least the foregoing reason, applicants respectfully request that the § 102 rejection based on Shennib be withdrawn.

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 1-15 are patentable. This application is therefore in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laura A. Sheridan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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